



ROGER GRANT
... lectured

Vital points lost as Wycombe hit deadlock

By **STUART EARP**: Kingstonian 0, Wycombe Wanderers 0

WYCOMBE Wanderers dropped two points in their bid to catch up with Rothmans Isthmian League Division One leaders Hendon with a ragged 0-0 draw at Kingstonian on Saturday.

The Blues are now six points adrift of last year's champions and two behind Dulwich with three and two games in hand respectively.

Manager Brian Lee made a couple of interesting changes on Saturday, bringing in Tony Brothers for Rob Williams and Tony Horseman for Dylan Evans. There's no doubt Brothers justified his place after his midweek showing against Maidenhead and he put in another hard working performance. Horseman alone stood out in an off-form attack, his clever flicks and nudges causing the K's many anxious moments.

It was a shame his two fellow front runners, Keith Searle and Steve Perrin, couldn't capitalise on his efforts. For once, Searle was well below par. Perhaps if one of two early chances had gone in, it would have all been different.

But if the forwards were not up to standard, neither were the midfield men. Despite the extra creativity of Brothers, they were

hustled into errors by the busy Kingston trio and the extra pressure on Pritchard, who played for England in the 2-0 win over Northern Ireland at Maine Road, Manchester, on Friday evening, were plain to see.

The Wycombe skipper found his match in Trevor Pearce, who hounded him ceaselessly throughout the 90 minutes.

Perhaps the most pleasing aspect of the game from Wycombe's viewpoint was the performance of the centre backs. They came under a concerted Kingstonian assault in the second half and, despite some hasty clearances in the final minutes, withstood the pressure well. Full backs Gamblin and Grant, however, had their fair share of troubles.

Gamblin, who seems to be lacking in pace this term, found Johnny Doyle quite a handful while Grant did well to get through without a booking for several illegal challenges on the top scoring Trevor Waughman, once with Wycombe.

As a spectacle, the game was ruined by a strong wind and predictably, the side with the advantage of the elements did all the attacking in either half. At first it was Wanderers, who had enough chances to have put the game beyond question after 45 minutes. A combination of ex-

cellent saves and a fair share of luck for goalkeeper John Overton, however, kept them out. Overton sprang into action after five minutes when Searle gathered Bullock's long throw, sidestepped one defender to create space but then fired the ball against the 'keeper's legs. A few minutes later Denham referee Darryl Reeves turned down a legitimate appeal for handball when Paul Procter deliberately handled inside his penalty area.

The ball was rarely out of the Kingstonian half in these early stages as Holifield and Brothers worked busily, intercepting several misdirected passes from the home side. When they did venture into Wycombe territory, John Maskell's seige-gun kicks soon sent them scurrying back.

For all their pressing, however, the visitors never really looked like finishing off their moves. The build-up was always promising but the vital spark needed for the breakthrough just wasn't there.

Grant was given a severe lecture by the referee after a string of fouls on Waughman in the 30th minute and five minutes later, Doyle produced Kingstonian's first shot at goal which Maskell saved with ease.

The match was devoid of incident until the fourth minute of

the new half when a superb one-two between Eshelby and Waughman completely split Wycombe's defence. Waughman had a clear shooting chance and struck the ball well but Maskell, off his line, spread himself and the ball cannoned off his legs for a corner.

The best chance of the match, however, fell to Searle a few minutes later. Horseman raced down the flank and bent an inch perfect cross around Preston into the area. Searle, for once left unmarked with the K's England centre half already committed, powered in a strong header from five yards but Overton produced a superb reflex save and palmed the ball down before gathering safely.

It was the signal for a much better half as Kingstonian threw off their defensive approach and began to press forward. Doyle began to create problems on the wings while Pearce and Procter buzzed dangerously in midfield.

Searle flashed a header just past the post after 78 minutes from Holifield's corner but it was one of only three flag kicks won by Wycombe as compared with six in the first period. Holifield, who lacked some of his usual sparkle, struck the side netting soon afterwards but

Wycombe were soon back with the initiative.

Micky Roach had a great chance to open Kingstonian's account in the 82nd minute when Waughman and Procter carved out a chance but Roach, at the far post, ballooned the ball high over the top with only the 'keeper to beat.

Wycombe were indebted to Bullock and Wood in the final minutes as Kingstonian pressed ceaselessly. Wycombe gave away far too many free kicks at this stage which kept them pegged back still further.

They had one final chance with only seconds remaining when Pritchard back-headed Holifield's corner to Perrin, who powered his header just over the top. A goal at that stage, although most welcome, would have been rough justice to Kingstonian who deserved a share of the spoils on this performance.

KINGSTONIAN: J. Overton; A. Kelsall, A. Hill, M. Preston, R. Adaway; P. Procter, M. Roach, T. Pearce; I. Waughman, K. Eshelby (sub S. Esslemont 65 mins.), J. Doyle.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; D. Gamblin, P. Wood, D. Bullock, R. Grant; A. Brothers (sub R. Williams 79 mins.), M. Holifield, L. Pritchard; A. Horseman, K. Searle, S. Perrin.

Referee: D. V. Reeves (New Denham).



IAN RUNDLE
... back injury